CONSIDERATIONS

UPON THE STATE OF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS,

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR MDCCXCVIII.

PART THE SECOND.

UPON THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS MAJESTY'S PLENIPOTENTIARY AT LILLE, AND THE INDEMNITY OF GREAT BRITAIN AT THE PEACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"CONSIDERATIONS, &c. at the Beginning of the Year 1796."

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THE material part of the following pages was written during the period of the Negociations at Lille, and under impreſſions inſeparable from what the Author regarded as at leaſt a great public danger and diſhonour. He had not, however, courage to take upon himſelf ſo great reſponſibility as attaches, in his opinion, upon perſons who interfere with the actual meaſures of the Executive Government. He chooſes a time for publiſhing theſe Reflections when they claſh with no object of Adminiſtration; when the good ſenſe and deliberation of the public may judge of them without heat, anxiety or prejudice; with the

tranquillity and even coldneſs which attend the diſcuſſion of remote and contingent intereſts. It will eaſily be ſeen, that he neither courts popularity nor favour; and that he ſpeaks the language of no party.—The greateſt danger of Europe, he conſiders to ariſe from the people's ignorance of their true ſituation, and from mean and temporizing politics in the Governments. He reſerves for a future, but not very diſtant opportunity, to offer a few Conſiderations upon the domeſtic ſituation of the Empire and its Dependencies, and the neceſſity of explicitneſs, economy, and example, in the Government, in order to enable the people to bear their ſhare of privations and hardſhips during the conteſt, and to triumph over every difficulty and danger.

MARCH 30, 1798.

CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

AS ſoon as France had received that conſtitution which ended on the 14th of Fructidor *, the king's ſervants brought down a meſſage † to both houſes of parliament, expreſſive of his majeſty's readineſs to treat for a *general peace*, and containing a virtual acknowledgment of the republic. Though no eagle flew, nor thunder rolled, nor favourable murmur iſſued from the aiſles of the Luxembourg, they ſeemed confident that their offering was accepted; inſpired and ſanguine of ſucceſs. The ſilence of the oracle and the ſuſpicions of its prieſts, that they had ap-

* 4th September, 1797. † 9th Dec. 1795.

proached the Altar with inſincerity, did not diſconcert nor lead them to deſpond. They held, they thought, in their hand a branch that would open every portal, and ſoothe every monſter, between them and their elyſium. They cannot ſay "*Phœbi cortina fefellit*;" they do not yet ſeem convinced that they have been deceived: and though the ſtate of Europe has, ſince that time, without intermiſſion, ſuffered new and progreſſive changes, more and more unpropitious to peace, and utterly inconſiſtent and irreconcileable with the ſafety or permanence of peace, they have not deſiſted from their attempts to obtain it, in ſpite of the avowed indiſpoſition and inſolence of the enemy, which have defeated them at Baſle, at Paris, and at Lille.

The moſt glorious advantages of his majeſty's arms have produced the ſame effect, as the averſion and the inſolence of his enemies. My Lord Malmeſbury expelled, or my Lord Duncan

Duncan triumphant, could not alter a tittle in the project for peace*: ſo wiſe, ſo perfect, ſo ſecure, and, above all, ſo certain of ſucceſs do thoſe inſtructions appear, which can neither ſwell by victory nor contract from failure; which are equally juſt and adequate under every alternative; adapted to the moſt contrary events, and becoming in the moſt oppoſite circumſtances.

Whatever, therefore, were the cauſes of the war, it can now alone be expedient to enquire into the cauſes of its continuance: it is no longer neceſſary to entrench ourſelves behind the Scheldt, and the Treaty of Munſter, or to trace its ſources beyond the deſart of the revolution. However blameable it may have been in ſome men to have defended our allies, and the treaties which bound us; and in others, to have maintained our conſtitution; however wicked it may have been in ſome of

* Declaration of October, 1797.

us to have combated for the ſyſtem of Europe, and the independance of its ſeveral ſtates, and in others to have taken arms for our religion, property, and civil ſtate: in ſhort, whatever be the nature and degree of our reſpective crimes and delinquencies, who, from whatever motive, and with whatever apprehenſions, have dared to reſiſt the aggreſſion or aggrandiſement of France, it is now become uſeleſs or ſuperfluous to accuſe us; unleſs we are ſtill guilty of protracting the war, and have been prevented by our pride, or our ambition, from offering ſuch terms of peace as France *might* and *ought to have* accepted.

When nations have made their appeal to arms, it is by the ſucceſs of them that their claims muſt be decided, inſtead of the original juſtice of their quarrel: if Juſtice weighs any thing in the ſcale, ſhe muſt bring her ſword with her; ſhe would once have been counted

counted at a negotiation for the perſeverance of the injured, and the favour of mankind.

The relative ſtate, therefore, of the belligerent powers, and not the cauſe of the war, or pretence of injury, gives the meaſure and equity of the peace. Indemnities are not for the juſt but the powerful. There is a right in wrong itſelf. The plunder acquired by crime is to be divided with juſtice; ſtates and banditti acknowledge this law.

If we have not offered to France her due ſhare of the common prey, which is the plain Engliſh of what diplomatic cant and miniſterial prudery have chriſtened by the affected name of mutual compenſation; if the project of Lord Malmeſbury does not leave to France her fair diviſion of the ſpoil—*then* we are the protractors of the war. If we ought to have abandoned the whole to France without any moiety or equivalent for our-

ſelves,

ſelves, *then* we are certainly guilty of its continuance. But if the Harbour of Trincomalé with the Iſland of Trinidada, and the Cape of Good Hope, are not more than an equivalent for Flanders, Brabant, Liege, Cologne, Holland, Savoy, Lombardy, and the whole catalogue of the French robberies; then, conſidering that the arms of France have not been more victorious than our own, and that our ſucceſſes upon the high-ſeas are equal to her's upon the high-ways, we have acted like thieves of honour, and are entitled to defend our equitable ſhare of the booty.

When peace was firſt offered to the republic, and ſo late as my Lord Malmeſbury's firſt expulſion from France, we propoſed to ourſelves ſome honeſter and nobler objects: we were willing to diveſt ourſelves of our conqueſts, in order to reinſtate our unfortunate allies in the countries of which they had been diſpoſſeſſed by

by the fortune of war, and to reſtore the balance of Europe. Upon an occaſion ſo generous, and with intentions ſo truly juſt and magnanimous, it would have been mean to have haggled or bargained: the more and the leſs were queſtions of trifling importance. We were indemnified by honour for all our ceſſions of intereſt. To be the acknowledged deliverers of Europe, had even a political advantage in reputation, and poſſibly in gratitude, which might eaſily counter-balance ſome degree of inferiority in our relative poſition. But now that we, together with all Europe, have abandoned that ſyſtem, which, in our turn, has defended all of us; now, that diſengaged by the treaty of Udina, we think of our individual ſtate alone, and are become inſulated in the politics of Europe, as well as in the map, it is doubtleſs our part to keep our full ſhare of the common plunder, and aſſert *our right in wrong:* more particularly, as our armed confederates demand

not only the whole of the purſe but the piſtol.

If we examine the *project* which has been rejected at Lille, we ſhall find that there exiſts no longer in any cabinet of Europe a baſis or deſign of peace, that is not founded in the complete abandonment of its ancient ſyſtem, or that is any thing elſe than a new plan for its diviſion and ſpoliation. Even England, the generous and impartial arbitreſs of its fate, and the protectreſs of its liberties ſo often, appears there in the character of one of its plunderers: meek indeed, and moderate, and ſelf-denying, and declining ſtill the invidiouſneſs and the full reward of a crime of which ſhe more than divides the meanneſs and the guilt.

How we have declined from our original purity and diſintereſtedneſs, and by what means we have fallen ſo imperceptibly through the

the mighty ſpace which ſeparates England at Paris, and England at Lille! How we have changed to ſuch wide extremes without a demiſe of the crown, or a change of miniſters, or a diſſolution of parliament, or the leaſt ſhock or violence of public opinion; and how we have glided ſo ſmoothly from our *ſine-quâ-non* of the Netherlands, to our *quâ-cum-omnia* of the Cape of Good Hope, I will not for the preſent enquire. I ſhall endeavour to diſcuſs the peace, as it was offered at Lille, upon the footing of political wiſdom only, ſince morality, ſince honour, ſince engagements the moſt ſacred and ſolemn that ever nations entered into, are publicly betrayed and inſulted by the baſis upon which it was projected; and I ſhall be able to ſhew, if I do not deceive myſelf, that, having abandoned the ſyſtem and public law of Europe, we are as much compelled, as political robbers, by the wiſdom of injuſtice, and the neceſſity of wrong, to keep our full ſhare of the conqueſts, as we were prompted

as a great and generous nation by a true and honourable policy to effect a mutual reſtitution, and reſtore the ſtate of things to the period before the war.

Juſtice, law, cuſtom, opinion itſelf, protect right. Wrong has no defence but power. To uſurp a little is weak as well as wicked. To ſeize that which may defend the robber is the wiſdom of iniquity. When the ſyſtem of this vaſt republic of Europe, when the relations of theſe federal empires are overwhelmed and forgotten, as they will be in a peace of plunder; when the common diſlocation is followed every where, as it muſt be, by partial convulſions, and internal changes, who does not ſee that there will be no right in any thing but occupancy, no tenure but the ſword? Is it poſſible for any one to be ſo fond and childiſh as to expect that juſtice, equity, or preſcription, will remain even in the language of ambaſſadors, and that words will ſurvive the ideas they repreſented? The whole

whole public code of Europe is cut off with a blow of the ſword, and all its leaves are diſperſed by this perfidious peace, by this true and effectual treaty of partition. Crime is every where ſucceſsful and acknowledged, uſurpation incenſed and revered, innovation ratified, revolt ſanctioned, robbery confirmed; and do men think that virtue, right, cuſtom, allegiance, property, will remain even in Dictionaries? or that they will be title-deeds, which will ceaſe even to be names? We ourſelves, (not certainly ourſelves) accomplices and parties in the guilt, and with no palliation but the ſmallneſs of our portion, do we think our folly any thing but an aggravation of our crime? and that it is either honeſty or wiſdom ſo to divide iniquity as to ſhare the baſeneſs without the reward, and the ſhame without the ſecurity? We have not even Ambition's plea; but are ſlaves and fools in an uſeleſs and a dangerous villainy.

Quod ſi violandum eſt jus regnandi gratiâ
Violandum eſt aliis rebus pietatem colas.

If we are to make a peace of plunder, let us not talk of moderation and falſe modeſty; we will be virtuous in other things; but abandoning virtue in the baſis and the principle, ſhe will but ruin and betray us in the detail and the conditions. We have nothing but power to look to, becauſe nothing but power can be the ſanction of ſuch a peace. Who will make himſelf reſponſible for its duration? Who of either* party will heſitate or ſcruple to violate it for one moment, after it ſhall appear probable to do ſo with advantage? Thoſe who think that they can wreſt back again from France the fruits of ſo many crimes and ſo much injuſtice? or France herſelf, unjuſt and criminal, when ſhe thinks ſhe can add to her uſurpation, and lay her yoke upon other necks? Who will

* See note, page 36, part 1ſt.

engage

engage that peace ſhall laſt for a year? for a month, for an hour longer than the voyage from Cadiz, and the Texel to Breſt harbour? Does any one think ſuch a peace *ought* to laſt? and can that laſt which every one knows ought to be broken? If peace comes to be not reſtoration of right, but ratification of violence, what does it bring but more leiſure to complain, and brood over injuries no longer doubtful, no longer to be remedied? In this ſtate of things it is that the minds of men dwell upon their wrongs, and grow rancorous and gloomy; and in this ſtate and diſpoſition of men's minds it is that thoſe obſtinate and interminable conteſts are prepared, of which there is no end but with the nations that wage them; and no cauſe but the unjuſt and premature pacifications, with which weak or cowardly governments have endeavoured to compoſe and compromiſe their firſt conteſts and dangers.

As this peace therefore cannot, in the contemplation of any man, endure longer than the renovation of the firſt of the enraged and revengeful powers that conclude it upon unjuſt and temporizing foundations; as it will have no ſanction from honour, equity, or common intereſt, after the firſt of the high contracting parties ſhall have reſpired from the weakneſs occaſioned by the war; as all alliances and treaties (as I ſhall preſently ſhew) are henceforth to be regarded as vain and uncertain, it is, I imagine, to our relative ſtrength, and to the equality of our offenſive means, that we muſt look excluſively not only for its permanence, but for its obſervance at all! If France had fleets now, does any one think ſhe would make peace at all? Does any one think then, that ſhe will obſerve the peace after ſhe ſhall have obtained fleets? And does any one think we can raiſe the blockade of her ports, and of Spain and Holland, without giving her fleets? Can we make peace without

out giving her ſeamen, who are now our priſoners*? Can we reſtore her colonies without giving her the nurſeries and ſchools of ſeamen? And can a peace laſt which furniſhes her, in an inſtant, with every thing wanting to her, and inducing her to break it?

It is worth while to conſider what the external poſition of France would have been had the citizens Le Tourneur or Treilhard been inſtructed to catch at the offers of Lord Malmeſbury; and to examine what would have been the extent, population and reſources of her empire, while the ſhare of Great Britain in the plunder was reſtricted to the acquiſition of the Cape and of Trincomalé; and in making this compariſon of booty, it would be important to contemplate not only the

* There are 24,000 French ſeamen now in the Engliſh priſons of war, beſides whatever number we may poſſeſs in the Weſt-Indies and other quarters.

relative

relative power acquired reſpectively, by the treaty of partition, but the actual power remaining internally in each country, as previouſly affected by the events, and the manner of carrying on the war; for if the *ſtatus quo ante bellum* had been literally admitted, the whole public debt of France has been paſſed under the ſponge of the revolution, while we have added at leaſt a third part of the total to our own enormous mortgage. The diſcontents of this country would be foſtered and enflamed by the intercourſe of France and the preſence of a French miniſter, while the little diſpoſition there exiſts in France to reſiſt or complain of any injury or oppreſſion, would be allayed, or diverted by the return of commerce and the liberty of the ſea. Britiſh capitals would flow into France, and French principles and conſpirators would overwhelm England. The credits France would eaſily obtain in this ſpeculative country would give her friends and aſſociates in all

her enterprizes, and the ball of revolutions would gather by every mercantile connection that ſhe made, and every million ſhe became indebted to our merchants. This would have been the caſe if the peace had been projected upon the *ſtatus quô:* but beſides theſe advantages, of which we could not well, under any circumſtances, I fear, be able to deprive the enemy, ſhe was to derive others of no trifling concern, notwithſtanding all the poſſible bad management, and all the poſſible commotions upon which we might rely to counteract or diminiſh them. The peace of which Lord Malmſbury was inſtructed to preſent the project, would have ratified the French empire in the Netherlands, her paramount authority over the vaſſal governments of Holland, Spain and Sardinia, and her tutelary ſovereignty in the new Italian republics, together with whatever part of the Venetian or Imperial territories within the Rhine, was not to be given to the Emperor, either by the treaty of

Leoben, or as an equivalent for its violation. For this is an axiom of our new public law, and a principle of the French code of nations, that every treaty may be broken, and every oath be cancelled, ſo it be done with an indemnity, or a compenſation. What other changes were to be effected in Europe in favour of France, are perhaps as yet too myſterious and uncertain to be ſtated amongſt theſe acknowledged and public uſurpations; (Rome and Swiſſerland had not yet been conquered) it is not material to ſwell the catalogue with Avignon, Porentru, and the German rents in Alſatia, the briars and brambles in a foreſt of iniquity. It is enough to trace her from ſea to ſea, and from mountain to mountain, from whence ſhe ſtrides like another Neptune, ſhaking the foundations of the earth.

Of all the barriers of Europe, of all the boundaries, natural, or created by the art and policy of nations, the Britiſh Channel alone remains,

remains, yet conſiderably impaired, and menaced and outflanked by an hoſtile line, from Uſhant to the Ems. The Alps and the Pyrenees are levelled; Savoy and the Netherlands, that once, with a ridge of fortreſſes, preſented an impenetrable chain, and fixed the political geography of the world, are in the hands of France; her garriſons are admitted in the Adriatic gulph, and the iſlands of the Grecian Archipelago: the ſceptres of Turin and Madrid are ſwayed by her nod, and exiſt by her connivance; Brabant and Auſtrian Flanders are annexed; the United Provinces, held in awe by their own ramparts, now manned by France, are governed by French legates and proconſuls; the commercial republics of Italy plundered and revolutionized; all abandoned by the peace to the French regimen and forced to ſwell the catalogue of the French power and reſources, give a ſolidity and extent to the military republic, which no wiſe man, and no free ſtate,

can look upon without terror and apprehenſion *.

It would be eaſy to add to this chart of aggrandizement, if it were not better to leave ſomething to individual thought and reflexion. Tracing the degrees upon the ſurface of the globe, the mind cannot fail to people ſo much ſpace, and to figure to itſelf the inhabitants, the ſhips, the ports, and the wealth acquired by the Republic. The peculiar circumſtances of a peace of plunder, diſpenſe me from eſtimating the arts or induſtry, the agriculture or commerce, of ſo many millions of new ſubjects. Conſervation is not the object of the conqueror; it is not to round or conſolidate his new dominions that will employ his care, but to wield the arms they

* It is to be obſerved, that all the uſurpations of France ſubſequent to the PROJECT OF LILLE are purpoſely omitted.

bring

bring him, but to advance his outpoſts upon a new line, and a broader circumference.

There are perſons, I know, who will infer from hence, that the acquiſitions of France are not ſo dangerous as if ſhe made them in the ſpirit of conſervation. I confeſs, I think very differently; for with that ſpirit, France would, of neceſſity, be pacific; but with the oppoſite ſpirit, ſhe is, by the ſame neceſſity, military and aggreſſive. From this doctrine, however, that the ſacrifices conceded to the republic will not weigh as heavy in the political balance, as if they were made to a juſt and tutelary government, very important conſequences are drawn, in the minds of ſome perſons, with juſt as much prudence and ſecurity, no doubt, as all the errors and inequalities in the ſcales of peace, are corrected, in thoſe of others, by their belief and expectation of miſgovernment in the uſurper, and of confuſions and civil wars in his own boſom. To me theſe ideas occur,

but

but with very different ſenſations, and leave, I own, the moſt oppoſite impreſſions upon my judgment: for if France becomes pacific and conſervatory, theſe provinces, which by the peace are to become part of her, will more than double her power and reſources, always too great for the equilibrium of Europe. They amount at leaſt to one-half of her empire prior to the war, conſidered abſolutely and without relation to other ſtates. But, in the relative ſcale, the addition of one-half reſolves the Grecian problem, and more than doubles the whole; being all diſpoſable and offenſive, all military means and reſource. If France, notwithſtanding the peace, ſhould remain ſtill bent upon waſte and revolutions, then the annexed countries are to be eſtimated as recruits and plunder, as magazines and arms, as fuel and materials of anarchy and war; ſo that if the revolution were to ceaſe at the peace, the French empire over Europe would be erected upon the

proſ-

proſperity of the conquered countries; and if it were to continue after the peace, the French principles would be advanced, and propagated, and eſtabliſhed by the ſoldiers, and the plunder they would ſupply.—Under a good adminiſtration, they ſuppoſe the paramount dominion of the French ſceptre—under a bad one, the power of revolution, and the progreſs of barbariſm.—With a provident ambition they found a new Rome—with a furious and deſtructive ambition they enthrone new Goths, and Huns and Lombards, upon the ruins of the civilized world. For my part, I fear, there is not a Frenchman who would not rather be Alaric than Cæſar, Attila than Scipio; and I regard all the conqueſts of France, and all the truces which may ratify them, as ſo many epochas and ſtages in the career of a new Vandaliſm and darkneſs which are preparing to involve all human ſociety. Plunder and recruits, however, ſhe will at leaſt draw from the unfortunate countries in her power, which even at this time

ſhe divides into ſlaves and ſoldiers. Miſery and oppreſſion are the nurſeries of her armies, recruited by wickedneſs and calamity. Plunder and recruits are demanded by her, by a law of moral neceſſity and political gravitation. The wealth and growth of Italy and Flanders are abſorbed by the emptineſs of France. She fills the chaſm of her population with the rubbiſh of the world. All that hangs looſe and floats upon ſociety, throughout Europe, obeys her influence, and flows towards her.

Soldiers, and with them plunder, and the power of wickedneſs and barbariſm, ſhe will draw from this immenſe aggrandizement, in which it ſeems all Europe is prepared to acquieſce. But it appears to me, that ſhe has gained already, and will have confirmed to her, and ratified by the peace, a power of miſchief, which ſhe will eſteem at a higher rate than the transfuſion of foreign blood and gold into her exhauſted circulation: that ſhe

ſhe has gained, and will fix and ſtamp for her own, advantages that ſhe will value more than ſetting her gigantic feet over ſo many promontories and rivers, and overleaping every frontier with which the arms and prudence of a whole century have confined her. By the ceſſion of the Netherlands, the European union is diſſolved, the bridge of England into the Continent is broken down: by the peace of plunder and partition, the public law, the faith of nations, the relations of antient amity, and the ſanction and bond of new leagues, are ridiculed and vilified. *Whoever looks at the end of the war, will believe we have made it confederated with France againſt our common allies, or at leaſt refuſe to believe, that either party had a virtuous or an honourable cauſe, when both have concurred in ſo baſe and ſo guilty an iſſue.* *France* will prize the benefit of the *common diſhonour*; ſhe will know how to eſtimate the *general depravity and diſgrace:* it is

her excluſive gain; and *to have baniſhed faith and ſhame from the tranſactions of nations, ſhe will value as a pledge not only of her impunity, but her greatneſs.* Upon the crimes and follies of her enemies, during the war, ſhe has reared that enormous and miſhapen maſs which is yet called her republic. By the common crime of the peace, ſhe will deſtroy all principle, all opinion; and triumph over the reluctant hypocriſy of ſtates, and the *laſt* ſcruples of public morality.

The advantage, however, of France in this peace of plunder, is not confined to the triumph of immorality; ſhe derives a ſpecific intereſt from her ſhare of the plunder, which cannot be compenſated, even by adequate values in the booty allotted to us; for beſides that by the nature of the peace, no future treaty can be conſidered as binding and effectual, againſt which, any intereſt can at any time be alledged, or any convenience

venience pretended—ſhe knows that by the ceſſion of the Netherlands, the real bond and intereſt, the *caſus fœderis* of every treaty that ever was, or can be made, between this country and the Houſe of Auſtria, is effectually cut off. If ever England could hope to arm the emperor in another war againſt her, and to employ by that means, a part of her forces in her own defence upon her own frontier, it could only be from the vivacious claims of that monarch upon the Netherlands, which might ſtill perhaps linger in the chancery of Vienna, and ſurvive a forced ſurrender, or an intereſted exchange and equivalent. The ſubſidies of England might tempt him to a war *otherwiſe* advantageous, but as a mere mercenary that power could never employ him; ſo that England having accepted of plunder, and the emperor being indemnified, (whether in Italy alone, or in Bavaria beſides, is immaterial, excepting as to the degree and ſuddenneſs and expanſion of political immorality) there

could be no danger of any future union between thoſe courts, whoſe intereſt ſhe had ſatisfied, and whoſe honour ſhe had ſubdued. From hence ſhe poſſeſſed the means of chuſing her enemy in another war, and attacking either ſingle-handed, without the fear of an alliance, which had no longer the ſupport, either of good faith, or of a common intereſt. That the enemy ſhe will chooſe is England, there can be no doubt, becauſe the policy of England will always be to ſuccour the continental enemy of France; but the continental policy is ſo perplexed and entangled by reciprocal jealouſies, that England may be deeply wounded before it can be ſettled which of the powers on the Continent ſhall move to her aſſiſtance. The general policy or gratitude of Europe, I confeſs, I do not rate very high; and though it is undoubtedly the common intereſt of the great powers on the Continent, that we ſhould remain as a counterpoize to France, yet the moment it is rendered uncertain,

whether

whether it is more the intereſt of one power than another, it appears to me of no conſequence and effect. But admitting that it ſhould remain the intereſt and policy of any one power upon the Continent in particular, or the general policy and deſign to move to our aſſiſtance, upon which ſide is the diverſion to be created? The emperor no longer poſſeſſes any frontier towards France; the Ciſalpine republic, and the republics on the hither ſide of the Rhine, are interpoſed between him and France; the low countries are henceforward France; the King of Pruſſia, if ever he were to become our ally, is too far removed in the map, and cut off as we are both from Holland, can co-operate in no ſingle point. The keys of the Pyrenees and the Alps are in the hands of France. With the means of invading every ſtate in Europe, ſhe is rendered ſecure and inacceſſible to them all. France, therefore, will cloſe the preſent war with the flattering proſpect of being able to attack us

ſingle handed in the next war; and this advantage, even before the rancour and ſpirit of revenge which ſhe now breathes againſt us, ſhe would have prized as of the higheſt and moſt ineſtimable value. It is well known, that for the laſt fifty years at leaſt, it has been a maxim of political faith in the French cabinet, that in ſuch a war ſhe could not fail to cruſh and extinguiſh us. This important poſſibility, therefore, ſhe would have purchaſed with mighty ſacrifices, even in purer times, and with no hoſtility in her boſom, but that of rivalſhip and ambition. How dear and valuable muſt it now appear to her, when ſhe openly threatens us with all that revenge and luſt, and avarice * can inflict, of wounds, diſhonour and oppreſſion? Now, when added to that poſſibility ſhe multiplies in her own hands, the power, facility, and advantage of

* The Engliſh women and the Engliſh guineas has long been a *cri de guerre*.

attack:

attack: now that poſſeſſed of harbours oppoſite the mouth of the Thames, and outmeaſuring our coaſts, ſhe may pour her forces from every haven, and with every wind? I confeſs, for one, I cannot conſider all this without deep and ſerious apprehenſion, and I would fain (if it were poſſible, amidſt the languor of the public mind, and the obſequiouſneſs of the King's miniſters towards it) ſeek a better remedy againſt the danger, than what ſeems to be eſteemed ſo powerful, and is, doubtleſs, ſo certain a reſource as the miſgovernment or civil broils of France.

But when I compute in my own mind the reſtoration of the whole of the French colonies now in our poſſeſſion, the readmiſſion of France into India, where our government appears to me more proſperous than ſecure: and the accumulation of her maritime and colonial preponderance by the acquiſition of the Spaniſh part of Hiſpaniola, and her power

over

over the naval forces of Spain, Holland and Venice; when I add to theſe means of inſult and offence, the eagerneſs, perhaps the neceſſity for war on her ſide, which would render any peace a ſtate of diſtruſt, alarm, and armament, I am forced to bow down in gratitude for the rejection of our offers, and to rejoice in the continuation of war, if it is not terminable with leſs danger, leſs calamity, leſs diſgrace, and leſs immorality, than we have projected.

Whatever may be the chances of a civil war ariſing in France, to extricate us out of the evils we ſeem willing to plunge into at the peace; whatever may be the probability or the juſt and near expectation of ſuch a criſis, under the preſent oppreſſion of that unhappy and inſulted nation, it is impoſſible to conſider the phyſical force of France without terror and diſmay. I have already explained my ſentiments upon thoſe topics;

and,

and, upon the preſent ocaſion, it is leſs important to confirm or deſtroy that diſhonourable hope in us, than to be convinced that ſuch expectations are better reaſons for avoiding or delaying the beſt peace, than for courting or precipitating the very worſt; and therefore that they furniſh the reverſe of a defence or palliation of my Lord Malmeſbury's inſtructions.

Beſides the expectation of the civil war, there is but one argument amongſt all thoſe that I have heard aſſigned for agreeing to this enormous maſs of aggrandizement, that appears to me to require any degree of refutation, and that only becauſe of the effect it ſeems to operate upon a certain claſs and order of underſtandings. I hear it ſaid with much confidence before thoſe, and even by thoſe, who ought rather to feel ſhame than confidence upon ſuch an occaſion, that it is impoſſible to think worſe or to apprehend more from the

preſent project of peace, than men feared and thought of the peace of 1783; that that peace was commonly reputed at the time, to be diſgraceful and diſaſtrous, inadequate to our remaining reſources, and to the relative ſtate of us and our enemies; that by that peace we abandoned the thirteen colonies of America, and ceded iſlands to France and Spain; that we were conſidered commonly in Europe to have deſcended from our rank among the ſtates of it, and were calculated by France herſelf to be no longer more than a power of the third order *; that no hope could then have been formed in our favour, from the reſentment and cenſure of the Houſe of Commons, and their declaration that the peace was inadequate to the pretenſions of our relative ſituation, becauſe that vote was generally aſcribed to party-pique and diſappointment, and it was the common ſentiment and feeling, that our condition did

* Mirabeau, Rabaud de St. Etienne, &c. &c.

not

not entitle us to more favourable terms than we obtained; that our debt had encreaſed a third part of the total, a third part of our commerce was abandoned, our manufactures were interrupted, an arm of our power and empire was cut off, and a principal branch of our revenue and population intercepted. "The "ſun of England was declared to be ſet for "ever," and an univerſal dark and fatal deſpondency ſeemed to hover over us. Nevertheleſs, the omens and menaces of theſe times and that peace, paſſed over us, and with the interval of two years at the utmoſt, we recovered our rank, our credit, our commerce, and our political importance.—It is eaſy to perceive the tendency and final ſcope of all this reaſoning; we imagined ourſelves more degraded and unfortunate at that peace, than we were in reality; we deſpaired beyond what we needed to have done; the chapter of accidents turned out in our favour; and ſo without doubt it will now do!

Though I have not diminiſhed or diſſembled the force of this argument, I confeſs it fails of convincing my reaſon. To have eſcaped once, ſeems to me but an inſufficient motive for tempting or truſting fortune a ſecond time. The convulſions of our enemy, no doubt, concurred with our own efforts and enterprize, to extricate us from the ſituation upon which we had fallen in 1783: but ſhall we always truſt, and truſt excluſively to that *odium ſui* which Tacitus invoked upon the enemies of Rome, without reliance upon our own fortitude and prudence? and are theſe foundations ſo ſecure and virtuous as to enable us to throw down all the props and buttreſſes with which we have hitherto endeavoured to ſtrengthen the fabric of peace, and uphold the pillars of our greatneſs? Surely it is important to conſider well, and I muſt be forgiven if I preſs it with obſtinacy upon the reflexion of the public, what reaſons exiſt at this time for expecting the unexpected deliverance

ance we experienced then? whether the circumſtances of theſe two periods are ſo reſembling and parallel to one another as thoſe perſons would infer or inſinuate; and whether there is not a material diſtinction between our caſe at that peace, when we acknowledged our danger without foreſeeing the remedy; and this, where the confidence of the remedy is made an argument to ſhut our eyes and plunge into the danger?

Perhaps I might ſafely truſt this opinion to the public feeling, but it will be at leaſt pardonable if I err from too much caution, and compare ſome of the moſt prominent circumſtances of the two epochs, which will eaſily deſtroy the argument from analogy. By the peace of 1783, it is true that we conſented to a very great diminution of our empire; but the advantages poſitively acquired by the enemy were diminutive indeed, and did not certainly amount to the indemnity of the

fiftieth

fiftieth part of the expences with which the war had left him oppreſſed and exhauſted. By the debt he had accumulated, by the principles he had defended and received, he had brought into his own boſom thoſe very ſeeds of revolt, and thoſe internal dangers and confuſions from which we were delivered by the peace. Our ſtate was indeed diminiſhed, but our honour was entire. A peace which diſmembered our empire, diſarmed the envy alſo and rancour of our maritime rivals, which, ever ſince the peace of Paris, had brooded in every court, and made the whole commonwealth of Europe pleaſed ſpectators of the humiliation that we ſuffered. The ſyſtem of Europe and the public law remained and flouriſhed, and we had a juſt expectation, both of the duration of peace, and of alliances and aſſiſtance, if it were wantonly to be broken. If any one indulged a hope from the diſtractions of our neighbour, it was a hope of many years of peace for Eu-

rope, from the reform and amelioration of his own government and empire. It was a hope of general tranquillity from individual improvement. There was then no ſpeculation, no wiſh of evil to our enemies, no baſe illiberal deſire of miſchief more ſalutary than our own virtue, economy or wiſdom. A peace of plunder and common wrong had not ſhaken the ſanction from our treaties; and we could look, unblamed, as to a pledge of their duration, to that ſituation of our enemy, which would occupy him at home, and prevent him from diſturbing them. If there were ſtateſmen who foreſaw the exploſion that has ſince convulſed that unhappy empire, they did not dare to alledge it as a motive or defence of a peace, for which they pleaded humble, but ſtrong neceſſity; when they ſevered us from America, they did not bid us be of good cheer, we ſhould be indemnified by the civil war which hung over France; when they abandoned the loyaliſts,

when

when they ceded Dominica and Minorca, they did not cry out, no matter, we ſhall be compenſated by the calamities that wait for France. Humble but ſtrong neceſſity was all their plea, and all their hope was peace; a juſt and honourable hope from our own induſtry and fortune; commerce, and above all, economy, they ſaid, with many years of peace, might repair our privation; upon her lap, upon her unruffled boſom, they laid down their anxious head; with that ingenuous and virtuous ſcheme they dared to diſarm, and truſted to reſpire. But what was the danger of their miſtake, if they had made one? what were the diſaſters that hung over their country, if they had been deceived? We ſhould have declined in power; we ſhould have felt a gradual decay; we ſhould have miſſed the blood we had ſhed, and the arm we had amputated. In the lapſe of time, and with the current of events and years, with prepared and pliant ſpirits, adapted to neceſſity and uſe, we ſhould have

have glided down into that third order of the powers, where the bitter inſolence of our enemy had already ranked us. But at that time, peace was peace. We could diſarm with confidence; we could diminiſh our burthens with ſecurity. We diſbanded our armies; we diſmantled our fleets; we returned to our fields and looms; freſh air played round our temples; we ſlept and were renewed. But what has ſuch a peace in common line with that which, whenever it arrives, is now *projected* to cloſe the war we are engaged in? Have the circumſtances of theſe two periods any thing in parallel or analogy? If a definitive peace were to be ſigned to-morrow, at Lille or at London, can we diſarm, can we diſmantle, can we confide, can we reſpire? will France ceaſe to plunder and recruit? will ſhe ceaſe to agitate and conſpire; will ſhe ceaſe, even to inſult and to threaten? Is every thing to be feared from hurricanes, nothing from the tides and trade-winds of hoſtility? but

our weſtern ſhores of Europe are relieved by ſtorms; the atlantic wave beats heavier in the calm. Let us then open our eyes (it is full time) upon our true ſituation, and ſince *we will* have peace, let us fairly know the peace we are to have!

Every negociation, every attempt, even the very name of peace is a ſtumbling block in the way of the French government, and a momentary check in that career of barbariſm and diſſolution, through which it drives mankind. If it is ſtill uſeful to gain theſe pauſes, and to catch at every projection in the abyſs through which we are falling, I am content to offer ſtill new negociations; if it is ſtill neceſſary to expoſe their tyrannical deſigns againſt the liberty of Europe, after the ſyſtem of Europe is abandoned by every power in it; if any advantage is derived, even now, by expoſing afreſh the perfidy or the perjuries of France; if any veil or ſhadow is

ſtill

ſtill ſpread over the ſmalleſt part of them, I am ſtill willing that new efforts ſhould be made to remove every miſt, and every thread that hangs over them. I would be deterred by no inſults; I *could* be wearied by no diſappointments. But if, after what has happened, and happened I think, without the ſurprize of one rational being in the whole public of Europe, any other end or object is propoſed by theſe inauſpicious conferences; if the king's miniſters ſeriouſly believe, that in the preſent convulſed and disjointed ſtate of Europe, and from the preſent anxious and guilty tyrants, twice the uſurpers of the French government, and traitors not more to the throne than to the republick, they can obtain any permanent peace, or any peace at all, which ſhould bring a ſtate of repoſe, and diſarmament; if they rock themſelves with this abſurd and deceitful hope, and are intoxicated with theſe wild and dangerous ſpeculations, then I muſt acknowledge my ob-

ligations to the prepoſterous ambition of the enemy; then I muſt bleſs the terror or the pride which defeats their plans, and rejects their capitulation.

Peace is of neceſſity, either armed or confidential, there is no alternative or ſubterfuge. If the firſt, it has little but the name of peace; if the ſecond, it is full of danger, beyond any ſtate of war. A confidential peace, founded in robbery and the ratification of wrong; a confidential peace, reared upon the ruins of the ſyſtem by which we, and all the ſtates of Europe, have been preſerved independent and free from a foreign yoke, and before any new ſyſtem or balance of power is eſſayed, or even invented, is not not only impoſſible but abſurd; is not only beyond our underſtanding, but contradictory to our reaſon. But if an *armed* peace is all that we can obtain, it is clear that we ought not to deſire it with the ſame impatience, nor to

buy it with the ſame expence and ſacrifice as a *peaceful peace*. If we may not ſleep, why ſo eager to lie down? It is a joyleſs banquet where the ſword is ſuſpended over our head. The paths of this peace are ſtrewed with thorns and poppies: ſhall we wound our foot or drown our ſenſes? If your eye winks, the enemy is upon you; if you watch, you conſume with a ſlow and doubling fever. Will your revenue ſupport an *armed peace?* Will you have recourſe to loans to ſupply the deficiency of your revenue? If you *could* borrow in the time of *nominal* peace, what would be the ſtate of your funds?—what of the exchange?—what of commerce? In the mean time the enemy makes war upon your credit and finance, almoſt the only part of the war in which you are *now* vulnerable. He exhauſts, he fatigues, he conſumes you. The name of peace leaves him to his attack, and exempts him from his danger. He continues his hoſtility, and is

re-

relieved from his defence. With his recruits and his plunder he menaces your coaſts and your colonies,—with his emiſſaries and his plots he diſturbs your interior, and encourages your jacobins. By the joint danger he exhauſts your treaſury, and alienates from your conſtitution your mean and mercenary people, murmuring at the burthens he renders neceſſary for their defence.

But if your ſtate is unquiet at home, what is it in your colonies? in your colonies, where he has ſown the fruitful ſeeds of inſurrection, during the laſt five years, and where the root has ſtruck profound and rank in a genial bed and a virgin ſoil;—in your colonies, where revolt is natural and legitimate;—where government is expoſed to treaſons and dangers, unknown amongſt the ſame colours and natures of human beings;—where the white empire ſhakes to its foundations, or leans henceforward on the dangerous ſup-

port

port of a black army;—in your colonies, cultivated by an unhappy race, which links us with the brute, and humiliates us, at leaſt, as much as it is oppreſſed by us.—In your colonies, where you have aſſociated the ſlave in the government, and placed the bayonet in the hands of deſpair.—In your colonies you cannot enjoy even that degree of falſe and ſuſpicious tranquillity in which it is propoſed to watch at home.—Here you are to admit the very ſyſtem of the enemy, to be modified, indeed, and qualified by my Lord Malmeſbury.—Here you are to organize the plans of Mirabeau and Barnave, with the comments of Rigaud and Sonthonax.—Here you are to admit and ſwear to the French conſtitution.—Here, if at the inſtance of England, and by the addreſs of her plenipotentiary, it is conſented to relax at all in favour of the planter and the metropolis, the ſlave and the Mulatto are to be told, the one, that he is deprived of natural liberty, the other,

other, of civil rights by the cunning and cruelty of England. The emancipating hands of France are tied up by the tyranny of England. The liberty of the Black, and the franchiſe of the Creole, interdicted by the mercantile apathy of England.—Their promiſed happineſs blaſted by her cruel policy, withered under her intenſe meridian avarice. Oh ingenious policy, egregious wiſdom, divine forecaſt of thought and prudence, to commit your rich and peaceful colonies to the *analogy* of a government which has foreſworne the principle of conſervation, which waſtes from policy, and ruins by deſign! Glorious *analogy*, for which St. Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, and the whole iſland of Hiſpaniola, which is either yours or nothing, are cheap, and vile, and nothing.

Well! but in the Eaſt at leaſt we ſhall be tranquil and ſecure. There we may re-

admit

admit the enemy, without all thoſe dangers which, doubtleſs, I have exaggerated! We may reſtore to him his counters at Chandenagore and Pondicherry, without all this inconvenience and anxiety; there we may repoſe: there will be peace, at leaſt, for the Eaſt India company, and the board of controul.—What? I thought the war had been the peace of India!—Are Pondicherry and Chandenagore all?—Is the neighbourhood of Tippoo-Sultaun nothing?—Is not the king of Myſore already armed, victualled, garriſoned, prepared at every point?—Does he wait for any thing but aſſiſtance: any thing, perhaps, but a ſignal from France?—Are the Mahrattas, the Nizam, the whole of the country powers nothing?—Are not all of theſe laid open to the reſtleſs intrigues and malevolence of France?—Are not the Rights of Man already circulated in the languages of the Vidam and the Koran? There are circumſtances ſtill more dangerous, and nearer dangers, in that part of your empire, which

I will not point out; but he is a miſerable politician, indeed, whom ſome late occurrences, not unconnected with the conſtitution of your own armies, have not made rejoice in the abſence of France from the peninſula of Hindooſtan. You cannot cloſe your eyes then even *there*. In the Eaſt, in the Weſt, in the body of your own ſtate, there is matter of watchful anxiety, or uneaſy dreams. Such is a jealous and an armed peace!—Such is the poſition in which it places you with regard to your enemy, I mean your foreign enemy; for to your domeſtic foe, ſuch a peace reſembles victory, and is welcomed as ſucceſs. *He* would triumph, if it were only in our diſhonour;—he would exult if it were only in the infamy of a peace, the conditions of which do not only abandon every object and every principle of the war, both moral and political, but violate every principle, and every form, and render incredible and ridiculous every future pretext of juſtice, of honour, and of virtue.

virtue. Conditions which, whatever are aſſigned as the cauſes of the war, betray them *all*. If the balance of power, they betray and abandon it to France.—If the civil order, with religion, property, law, charters, and all the duties and relations by which ſocial life is defended and endeared;—they betray and abandon it to France;—to France, who has condemned and exploded for herſelf alone, the wild and pernicious doctrines which bloody experience and ſatiety of ill have refuted and ſuppreſſed. Not ſo for other nations, and the reſt of men, whom ſhe has never ceaſed to regard, as ſlaves or enemies, with hatred and contempt. Amongſt theſe ſhe ſcatters, with malignant generoſity, the ſeeds of evil; in their ground ſhe ſets the dragon's teeth,—true ſymbol of democracy, where men ſpring from the earth to periſh inſtantly by mutual wounds. Amongſt theſe ſhe plants that tree of liberty, whoſe roots are ſteeped in blood, whoſe branches hang with poiſons. The danger of her

principles is not ſurely, (I addreſs myſelf to thoſe who have feared them moſt), in their beauty, or their wiſdom, nor in the happineſs of their practice; but in her ſucceſs, in her means, and power to propagate them by the ſword. Such a peace, therefore, is as favourable to the moral diſorganization of the reſt of Europe, as it is to the territorial aggrandizement and permanent dominion of France. It is not only *her* conqueſt, but our degradation, *her* encreaſe, but the general decay and danger. It brings not triumph only to France, and her principles, but the common fears and troubles, but the revolution, anarchy, and barbariſm of Europe *.

Such

* There remains no danger from the brilliant chimeras, any more than from the viſible deformity of the principles which have deſolated France. Not one of them has triumphed, and only one remains in exiſtence. This one, however, contains the ſeeds of all the reſt; for all would revive and ſpring up again, if France were permitted to *preſerve her conqueſts, and deſtroy the equilibrium of Europe.* Cured herſelf by experience, ſhe would

Such is the faint uncoloured outline of that feveriſh and anxious ſtate, which we are eager to purchaſe with all the conqueſts we have made upon the enemy; conqueſts which are now our ſole defence, the ſole balance of power, the ſole obſtacle and delay to his unlimited univerſal deſpotiſm: conqueſts which are held in truſt for Europe, for the barriers and the liberties of Europe; conqueſts, which, if ever France ſhould return to peace, and peaceful arts, will liberate at any time the Netherlands; in favourable ones emancipate the Dutch; and in the interval confine the ravages of anarchy, and

would ſpread around her the miſchiefs ſhe had baniſhed from her own boſom; ſhe would corrupt with the poiſons ſhe had vomited, and conquering with one hand, and corrupting with the other, ſhe would impreſs upon the nations that true diſ-organizing impulſe, which would make them revolve for ever round her own endleſs revolutions.

Conſiderations on the State of Public Affairs at the Beginning of the Year 1796.

the tyranny of France to the Continent. If ſuch a ſtate is preferable to the juſt, neceſſary, and victorious war that we are engaged in:—If we are determined to exchange our vantage-ground for this uneaſy and precarious ſituation:—If we prefer the poſt of danger without honour, to the poſt of honour without danger which we now hold:—If we prefer precarious ſafety in humility and baſeneſs, to our preſent proud and invulnerable ſecurity: or in the preſent ſtate of Europe, expect any ſafety but in arms:—If the people will have it ſo, and if the miniſters and the parliament will yield to this ignorant and unhappy will of the people:—If the government will not deign to enlighten it upon its neareſt and deareſt intereſts, and reſiſt its fatal errors and dangerous paſſions:—If they cannot awaken, or create in the Britiſh public, nor in the rich and threatened claſſes of the church and ſtate, a ſenſe of honour, nor a ſenſe of ſhame:—If they cannot extract

tract an offering from cumbrous wealth, or proud nobility:—If property is deaf, if religion nods, if there are no moral reſources in a corrupt and mercantile community, miſcalled a ſtate, and unworthy of its greatneſs:—If miniſters have abandoned the guidance of it, and are become no more than paſſive and obedient inſtruments of the multitude committed to their care:—If ſuch is the genius of government, and the diſpoſition of the people, I know of no remedy. Troy has been.

Exceſſere omnes adytis ariſque relictis,
Dii, quibus imperium hoc ſteterat.

But ſtill *this people* that command their obſequious governors to betray them, are a calculating people, and they know that a peace like this, with half a war eſtabliſhment, at the leaſt, and half the expenditure of war, is not *worth* as much as a peace of honour and ſecurity. They feel taxation,

taxation, who cannot feel for the departed glory or liberty of their country; here they are tremblingly alive, and ſhrink with a ſenſitive alacrity. Here, at leaſt, they feel, and, in the ſpirit which remains to them, they eſtimate this peace, as not ſo *valuable* as a genuine and perfect peace. They ſee it is a damaged, and a counterfeit commodity, and they will have it *cheap*; they know it is a ſmuggled and adulterated ſpirit; that it is not proof, and they expect a bargain.

This argument is of no little force, ſince it comes from them, for whom every thing is ſacrificed, to whoſe fugitive will and precarious wiſhes, the ſolid and permanent policy of the country has been made to give way in a race of popularity, and a ſtruggle for power. It would divert me too far from the courſe of my argument, were I to expreſs, in this place, my feeling and reſentment at the

the temporizing obſequious policy; the pliant and ductile character of miniſters, who appear to me to want of virtue, at leaſt, ſome of its dignity; and of wiſdom all its firmneſs; who, with the pureſt views, as I believe, and in the nobleſt cauſe, ſeem to me more blind to their own ſplendour than giddy from their height. This, at leaſt, it is neceſſary for them to know, and be prepared for, that the nation, ſuch as it is, and, with its preſent diſpoſition and ſentiments, will not approve of the ſame meaſure of conceſſion, nor be willing to diveſt itſelf of its conqueſts to the ſame extent, for the purchaſe of this equivocal and expenſive peace, that it would willingly conſent to for a peace of *confidence* and ECONOMY. To all other untoward and inauſpicious circumſtances which, if they perſevere, will uſher in this peace, they will do well, therefore, to add this alſo, which it is eaſy to foreſee, (even were not that of 1783

an example of it,) that the authors of it will miſs of the popularity they court, and be moſt loudly blamed by thoſe who have moſt urged them to conclude it.

If it ſhould appear, as I confeſs I hope it does by this time, to every candid and ingenuous mind, that there is nothing really deſirable in this peace of expence and vigilance, it is not, I imagine, leſs clear, that we can obtain *no other* peace by *conceſſion*. A peace of confidence is not to be bought or begged. The foundations of peace are very different from the conditions upon which it is concluded: theſe very often impair or deſtroy altogether its foundations. The baſis upon which a pacification is concluded, is very diſtinct from the baſis by which it is to be maintained; and is frequently the cauſe that it cannot be maintained. A dreadful experience, and a bloody ſchool, have taught mankind, that there is no real ſanction and bond

bond of treaties, but the common fear and inconvenience of breaking them. They are maintained by the reciprocal means of defence and injury, not by the weakneſs of one party, or the oath of either. In all their perjured hiſtory, how many are to be found that were not ſigned in actual contemplation of future hoſtilities? After the firm, laſting, and perpetual peace, which is ſworn to in the firſt article, how conſtantly follows that by which peace is rendered inſincere, precarious, and of ſhort duration, namely, robbery on the one ſide, and conceſſion on the other? Injury and extortion here, and there brooding revenge with politic ſubmiſſion. *Stant belli cauſæ.* So that it would be juſter to enquire into the cauſes of peace, than the cauſes of war, which recur for ever in the hiſtory of the world, as ſoon as the cauſes of peace are withdrawn. Theſe are nothing but an equality of power, and conſequently an equality of fear. There is no peace in

diſparity of conditions. Mutual weakneſs is a ſeal of peace, and ſo is relative aggrandizement; but when nations grow confident of their own ſtrength and power, ambition follows eaſily; ſo that reciprocal fear can alone reſtrain them, for the cauſe of war is never wanting: the conqueror ſees it in the weakneſs of the vanquiſhed, the vanquiſhed, as he reſpires, finds it ready to his hand in the injury he has ſuffered. He who would ſeek the cauſes of any war, any where elſe but in the conditions of the preceding peace, will much miſpend his time and labour, excepting indeed in ſuch a caſe as the preſent, where the courſe and order of things is prevented and overturned by new elements and ſudden revolutions. The peace of 1763 was the cauſe of the American war, and the peace of 1783 would have been the cauſe of other wars, if they had not all been anticipated and confounded by the French revolution, and the prepoſterous ambition of the French uſurpers.

If

If I were aſked, what was the cauſe of the ſecond Pontic, or the ſecond Punic war? I ſhould not anſwer, the ſiege of Saguntum, or the maſſacre of the Romans, but the peace that terminated the war of twenty-four years, and the peace which wreſted three provinces from Mithridates. Thoſe hard and unjuſt conditions could not ſurvive the weakneſs of the ſtate upon which they were impoſed; with its renovation, the cauſes of war returned alſo. If of the third Punic war? I would anſwer, that it is to be found in the concluſion of the ſecond. By that peace, Carthage abandoned Spain, and *all her iſlands*, as we are to abandon the Continent, and iſlands, without which we cannot hold our own; and by that peace, having nothing but the oath of a perfidious enemy to ſecure it, as we ſhall have nothing more, and with the temptation and power of breaking it in the hands of her implacable and preponderant enemy, as they will be placed in the

hands of ours, and having yielded up her ſhips to Rome, as France demands of us to yield up ours to her, ſhe continued to be an empire as long as it pleaſed Rome, as we ſhall continue to be called an empire as long as it pleaſes France! The firſt peace with Rome ſhe broke herſelf, becauſe ſhe recovered from it; Rome broke the ſecond, becauſe ſhe could not recover. Her ſtrength cauſed one war, her weakneſs another. This tempted *her*, and that her enemy. There is this difference, however, between us and Carthage, that ſhe was able to buy *peace twice*. The rancour of our enemy, his principles of barbariſm, and his near neighbourhood, force us to ſee, that the preſent is the laſt peace we can buy from France. She will preſently return without much intermiſſion and delay, to conſummate her atchievement, and deſtroy her Carthage *.

Is

* If any one ſhould think proper to enquire why I ſelect theſe inſtances, rather than from modern treaties, it

Is it not abſurd, then, to talk of *buying* a laſting peace, ſince the very price of it is the cauſe that it cannot laſt? And is it not abſurd and contradictory in terms, to talk of a peace of confidence, without a balance of powers? If we would have ſuch a peace, muſt it not be baſed, and founded upon our relative aggrandizement, ſince a mutual reſtitution can no longer be effected? Muſt it not be by maintaining our acquiſitions, ſince France refuſes to releaſe hers, inſtead of contracting and diminiſhing ourſelves within our former proportions, while France enlarges and even doubles hers? We have failed in the great cauſe for which we took up arms; we have not been able to repreſs the enemy within the frontiers of his empire. He has

it is becauſe, ſince the deſtruction of the ſyſtem of Europe, and abandonment of the balance of power, they would only perplex and miſlead; thoſe I have choſen, appear to me to apply ſtrongly to the peace of Udina, and the project of a peace at Lille.

extended

extended himſelf upon every ſide. The balance of power is every where overthrown: he has removed the landmarks of the world: we cannot any longer combine all Europe; we cannot rely, with certainty, upon a ſingle friend upon all her Continent; we cannot, in any future war, ſupply our inequality of means and population, by bringing another nation into the ſcale with us, to weigh againſt "the natural ſuperiority of France." The conquerors of the Continent, the victors in their duel with mankind, expect us ſingle-handed, and threaten to cruſh us with their gigantic and diſproportioned force. They wield at once the whole phyſical power of their empire, the fee ſimple of their ſoil, the capital of their produce and population: they oppreſs us with their numbers, and with numbers which are not theirs, with the plunder and with the ſoldiers of conquered nations. What is to be done? How are we to be defended?—by ſubmiſſion. Look at

Venice,

Venice, Genoa, Spain, Holland; look where you will in that part of Europe which they have pacified—By arms then? By arms certainly, and by our own arms alone, ſince we are cut off from the Continent, and from our allies. If we muſt, therefore, defend ourſelves by arms, muſt we not do every thing to preſerve our ſuperiority upon that element where alone our arms can defend us? Muſt we not ſpread and extend ourſelves upon the waters as France has ſwelled and enlarged herſelf upon the land? If ſhe will be Rome, muſt not we try to be Carthage? Is there any other wiſdom, any other policy, any other ſecurity, any other choice? Is this ambition? No. It is neceſſity. Is it thirſt of power? No. It is ſelf-preſervation. If we will preſerve our domeſtic ſtate, we muſt preſerve our relative power. If we will maintain our conſtitution, we muſt maintain our greatneſs. We are attacked at every point, above and below, at the centre and at

the circumference: there is no choice. If we will be free, we *muſt* be powerful. The ſyſtem of Europe is not more hateful to France than the ſyſtem of mixed and moderate liberty which makes us free at home, and powerful abroad. We can keep nothing but by keeping all.

Could we have reſtored the antient limits of Europe, we would ſeek no aggrandizement; could we maintain the balance of power, we would deſire no other ſtrength nor ſecurity; could we preſerve a ſingle certain alliance on the Continent, we would truſt even to the chapter of accidents; could we bring back France to the *ſtatus quô*, we would not go out of it ourſelves; were it attainable for Europe, we would accept it in India, at the Cape, at the Antilles. This is a peace that we will buy at any price; we will pay the conſideration of it for all the world. But ſince the conqueror of the Continent

tinent will not relent, ſince he will not liſten to this juſt and equitable ſcheme of virtuous wiſdom and equitable policy, what alternative is left us but to advance with equal ſtrides with him who will not recede with us? Have we any other ſafety? While he waſtes the Continent, we will plough the Ocean; while he oppreſſes foreign cities, we will exerciſe the innocent and profitable induſtry of our towns. We will nurſe our colonies, extend our fiſheries, encloſe our commons, multiply our canals, encourage our manufactures, diſcover new markets for them, improve the old ones, carry the produce of every clime, and exchange the redundance of every ſoil. Theſe ſhall be our arts. To whom of all mankind are they invidious or hurtful? By whom are they not received as benefits, and applauded with gratitude? Let us not then be wanting to our own fortune; let us not be unworthy of our deſtiny. Whatever employs our ſeamen, and nouriſhes our navy,

defends our coaſt, and enriches our country. Whatever renders it impoſſible for France to become again, I do not ſay, a formidable naval power, but a naval power at all, is our true policy, and the ſole defence of Europe. This empire is not hateful; this greatneſs is not dangerous to other ſtates. We will hold it only as a ſacred truſt; we will exchange it at any time, and under any fortune, for the *ſtatus quô* of the year 1789: we will yield every acquiſition, when France ſhall render what ſhe has uſurped; and, in the mean time, who is threatened or terrified by us? Whom can we conquer, whom even can we invade? The Ocean that ſurrounds us is a ſhield, and a ſhield only; the waters are our defence, and not our arms. The Continent of Europe is not only invulnerable, but inacceſſible to us. We never touched it but by treaties, ſubſidies, alliance. All theſe are now intercepted and cut off: we ſhall be miſſed, perhaps, in the ſcale of Europe, who will

will ſee, with ſome degree of favour and ſatisfaction, ſome reſource remain, ſome obſtacle preſerved againſt the intolerable tyranny of this corrupt and polluted Rome; and we ſhall at leaſt delay the ruin and diſſolution of the civilized world, while we protract our own downfall and diſhonour. The Continent too, may reſpire and recover, in no ſmall degree, from the preſent panic and aſtoniſhment which betray and deliver it hand-bound to France, while we engage her whole attention, and employ her concentered forces: hereafter the great powers of Europe may alternate with us in reſiſtance, and defeat, by divided but conſtant efforts, thoſe mighty projects which have triumphed over the general but ſhort-lived endeavour.

I cannot perſuade myſelf that the king's miniſters do not perceive all theſe advantages, and do not feel this neceſſity for preſerving the conqueſts till ſuch time as they can be exchanged

exchanged againſt thoſe of France. But I am told, they deſpair of the public ſpirit, and doubt of the reſolution of the people, under the inevitable hardſhips and preſſure of a prolonged ſtate of war. To this I anſwer, in the firſt place, that the miniſters have it not in their power to terminate the war; and that it will continue in ſpite of them, and of any terms they may offer, and even in ſpite of any peace they might conclude, upon terms like thoſe they have offered. In the next, that the ſtate of public ſpirit is not ſo properly their excuſe as their fault. It is good, however, if it is not high; and ſound, though it is not exalted. It would have been better and nobler, if care had been taken of it; if a generous principle and a generous example had come to it, from whence it had a right to look for them. Upon this ſubject I ſhall explain myſelf particularly in another place; I ſhall confine myſelf here to the aſking of a very few queſtions, which I would rather

rather have anſwered by the public feeling than by my own ſolution. Has care been taken to ſatisfy the public mind upon the enormous expenditure of the public money? Has the quota of income ſubſcribed in the higheſt places, been ſuch as to encourage the ſpirit of the public to contribute with patriotiſm from private fortunes? Are perpetual embaſſies for peace, treated always with inſolence; is the ſpectacle of our ambaſſador twice expelled and driven from the republic calculated to create a great and lofty ſpirit in the people? Is the project of a peace of plunder calculated to create a right ſpirit, and of a peace of unequal plunder to create a high ſpirit in the people? It is not, then, the ſpirit of the people that is to blame, or that can be aſſigned as an excuſe, for thoſe who have made it what it is, and neglected all that could have made it what it ought to have been, and what it may ſtill be, whenever that example is given to it from above, without which I

do not know of any people having atchieved, or endured any very great trial or ſucceſs. For my part, the more deeply I conſider and revolve in my mind the actual ſtate of this public opinion, the more I am at a loſs to determine whether it is more to be commended for being what it is, in ſpite of the neglect of government, and of the egotiſm and avarice of the great and rich, or more to be cenſured for being no better and no higher than it is, in ſpite of the glorious ſucceſſes of the war, the unrivalled renown and proſperity of the nation, and the juſtice and dignity of its quarrel.

To this deſpair, or doubt, however, of the public ſpirit, whether or not the plea be juſt in itſelf, or favourable to thoſe who aſſign it, we are, without doubt, to attribute that eagerneſs and impatience for peace, even without tranquillity and diſarmament, and thoſe perpetual projects and miſſions which diſtract

diſtract us at home, and impair our influence and dignity in the cabinets of Europe. I am far from cenſuring the moderation of the king's councils. Moderation is true wiſdom; but there is ſome danger of its declining into mediocrity and littleneſs. To hold every thing acquired in the war as a truſt for thoſe whom the war has deſpoiled and plundered is true moderation; and ſince the peace of Udina it is true generoſity. To reſtore every thing to the ſpoiler and plunderer of Europe, is neither of theſe, but the very contrary and reverſe of theſe: for do we not abandon the liberties of Europe, when we abandon that for which they may be redeemed, and which is a valuable compenſation to France even now for them? And do we not take the price of their abandonment, like a corrupt guardian, by a part of the plunder? If we are to conſider our portion of the ſpoil only, there is no doubt of our moderation; but if we eſtimate what we give up of the common

property and depoſit of Europe, and of our own honour for it, then I cannot find the footſteps of moderation. I ſee the principle and paſſion of ambition, with all its characters and diſtinctive marks. I ſee it treacherous to others, confident of itſelf, ſpeculative and daring. I ſee it traffic the welfare and happineſs of mankind for its own ſecurity and advantage; I ſee it falſe and hypocritical, pretending moderation, and covering its crime with the threadbare mantle of neceſſity. Neceſſity! Moderation! What? When fortune puts every thing into your hand; and makes you arbiters of the world, to ſet your coloſſal feet upon the promontory of Africa and the Archipelago of America, inſtead of holding the ſcales in the centre of Europe, and compreſſing her with your weight? To prefer your own ſordid intereſt and local politics (I ſpeak not here of your miſtaken view of it) to the general good, and the high office of diſpenſing it?

it? To prefer any thing, all things, to the unrivalled glory of reſtoring the balance of the world, and being hailed the general benefactor of mankind?

I have been accuſed by a great ſtateſman*, for whom I entertain a profound reſpect, and to whoſe politeneſs I am indebted, of entertaining ambitious views in the Weſt-Indies; I hope he will accept of this apology.—We are ambitious only of the general good, and careful only of our own ſecurity. Whenever the ancient lawful government ſhall be reſtored in his country, we truſt the public law of Europe, and the common principles of equity and juſtice will be reſtored along with it: we will take any engagement, in the face of heaven and of mankind, to reſtore every thing to every lawful government of Europe which

* M. de Calonne.

we may retain from their ſeveral uſurpers; whenever the ſtates of Europe ſhall be emancipated from the yoke of republican France, we will render every thing that belonged to them at the beginning of the war; to Spain as well as to Holland, the conſtrained and ſhackled allies of the republic. This is the ſpirit of all our declarations and manifeſtos *; that we will not uſurp from the lawful monarchy of France reſtored; not that we will not provide a defence for ourſelves, or an indemnity for Europe, againſt the dominion of revolutionary France, or againſt the contagion of the principles which, flowing out of France, have corrupted ſo great a part of it, and endangered, in ſo particular a manner, our colonies in the Weſt Indies.—We have taken no engagement not to reſiſt the arms, or diminiſh the power of the uſurp-

* Declaration, October 29, 1793.

ing republic, by our own relative aggrandizement; but, even in this article, we cannot be ſuſpected of ambition, who will hold the whole of our acquirement, but as a pawn and pledge for the emancipation of Europe, and reſtore the *ſtatus quô* before the war, *even to the republic*. What I have ſaid, therefore, of the identity of government in the Weſt-Indies*, can be regarded only with national, or rather republican prejudice, as a diſmemberment of France. For the reſt I have delivered only my own ſentiments, and, if, againſt my hope, M. de Calonne ſhould perſiſt in his opinion of them, he muſt at leaſt give the king's miniſters credit for *their* moderation, which I confeſs is very different from mine both in nature and degree.

The circumſtances of Europe have changed in ſo material a manner ſince I ha-

* Conſiderations, 1796, p.

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zarded that opinion; and it is now become ſo clear from the ſucceſſive pacifications which ſo many powers have made with the uſurpers of France, that the fate of that empire will be abandoned to its own ſtruggles, that I conſider the whole public fortune as in ſuſpenſe and abeyance. It appears to me premature in the preſent phyſical and moral ſituation of Europe to attempt a final ſettlement, and ſpecific adjuſtment of the diſputes and pretenſions that diſtract us. Conqueſts and revolutions deface the natural and the moral order: Reciprocally nouriſhing and ſtrengthening each other, they preſent two diſtinct but allied obſtacles to peace, which, I confeſs, I think it impoſſible to throw down, or to over-leap at the ſame moment.—From the principles of France I have long ceaſed to apprehend any thing for foreign nations, excepting in the caſe of her being able to make a victorious peace; the power

and

and the popularity they would gain by *that* event, would alone render them dangerous, and be able to propagate them, in ſpite of her own example and renunciation *. Her own repeal and execration of them, together with a juſt and equitable peace, would be the ſalvation of Europe. But her crimes and her ſufferings might be effaced and forgotten amidſt the ſplendor of her arms and ſucceſſes. She could not long maintain her influence in the countries ſhe revolutionized, unleſs ſhe maintained the dregs and refuſe of theſe communities in the power they uſurped. Theſe men would always look to France, becauſe, if the protection of France were withdrawn from them, they would inſtantly become amenable to the laws of their country which they had violated and betrayed. In ſpite, therefore of her own amelioration and return towards moderation, France would

* Conſiderations, 1796, p.

of

of neceſſity encourage jacobiniſm in the new republics, becauſe jacobiniſm would be the only bond of their dependence upon her. Every well-governed republic, every virtuous commonwealth of any name or form, would have as much to dread from theſe principles, and would conſequently be as naturally hoſtile to France, as any monarchy, mixed, or even abſolute *. Europe, at the concluſion of ſuch a peace, would remain in a ſtate of of civil war; in which the revolted and the conſpiring throughout all her territory, and in all her ſtates, would lean upon France, or look towards her. The principles therefore, of France, which, without her aggrandizement, as it ſeemed to me, would be extinguiſhed at the peace, it is evident to all the

* It is remarkable, that the free and fraternal arm of the republic has extended the bleſſings of revolution only to republics. The conquered deſpots of Turin and Madrid are maintained in their tyrannies, while the free citizens of Switzerland, Holland, Genoa, Brabant, &c. are all revolutionized.

world

world, will acquire additional force and vigour from a peace, admitting her aggrandizement. The juſt obſtacles, therefore, to peace are double; firſt, the phyſical variation and inequality of the territory of Europe, and ſecondly, its moral poſition. The uſurpations of France are the firſt difficulty, the civil war in Europe, the ſecond. If you could replace the antient limits of its ſtates, the moral order would be replaced of courſe, and without effort or ſtipulation; it would follow naturally, from the ſimple experience of the miſchief and miſery which have flowed from our deviation from it; from the abhorrence of the new principles which have been reduced to practice; and from the repentance and abjuration of them by France herſelf. But to imagine that you can reſtore the moral good, while you admit the natural evil, is fooliſh and abſurd. To think that you can bring back virtue, by acknowledging crime, and conſenting to the rewards of crime; that

you can reinſtate order by recognizing anarchy and revolution, and uſurpation, on every ſide, on the Scheldt, on the Rhine, on the Adige, on the Tiber—that you can eſtabliſh property, by agreeing to plunder and robbery, or maintain whatever may be yet untouched in Europe, by betraying or dividing whatever has been contended for; can be the madneſs of thoſe only whom heaven is preparing to deſtroy.

The preſent moment and circumſtances, therefore, are inauſpicious and unfit for peace; and it is either weak or perfidious to invoke it. Look at the ſtate of all thoſe countries which have purchaſed peace, and ſee if there be any thing there to envy or approve? throw your eyes over the whole of Europe, and ſay, if war be not the natural ſtate and order for all thoſe nations who will defend their conſtitutions, their independence and their property? If you will pull down the throne, the

altars, and the laws, and conſent to abandon the care and government of the country to whatever is baſe, and corrupt, and treacherous amongſt us, I think *you may have peace.*— France aſks this before all other terms; this is her firſt and true preliminary; inſtitute a government which I ſhall govern, and a conſtitution in which I will daily interfere and interpret for you; let felons rule you whom I ſhall rule, and who will lean upon me for impunity; who will confiſcate and forfeit every thing for my exchequer, and put your fleets and armies under my command and inſtructions; change your parliament for a club, and your king for a directory, and your religion for ſchools of atheiſm, and I will no longer dread you; be factious; be criminal; be bloody; be licentious; be idle; be poor; and then I will dare to truſt to you. Is not this the language ſhe has held? Is it not the law ſhe has given? Is it not the practice ſhe has enforced wherever ſhe has granted

peace? And is not war then the right and natural ſtate of our nation in particular, whoſe wealth and conſtitution, whoſe induſtry and morals, ſhe is reſolved to corrupt and deſtroy? She thinks there is no peace between right and wrong, between laws and murderers, between juſtice and uſurpation; and until our government ſhall become like hers, ſhe will never truſt it. War then is our ſtate, our true and wiſe poſition, and *economy* alone can enable us to hold it; an enemy like ours, is to be tired and diſappointed; the rapidity of his motion keeps him from his fall; he ſpins but cannot ſtand; ſuſpend the ſcourge and he lies upon the earth.

War then ought to be incorporated into our ſyſtem, and the whole of our conqueſts ought to be made ſubſervient to the conduct and economy of the war. The expences which we bear, and which are in truth too heavy to be borne, muſt be reduced by a ſtrict

ſyſtem

ſyſtem of economy; by ſacrifices to the ſtate, particularly from thoſe who enjoy honours and emoluments from the ſtate, and who muſt ceaſe to perplex themſelves and inſult the public, by diſputing the public right to contract its own profuſe liberality. Upon theſe points I ſhall ſpeak more plainly in another place; what I aim at here, is to perſuade the people to conſider their ſituation with a firm and patient ſpirit, and to look at war as the very reverſe of evil, ſo long as the enemy ſhall leave them no alternative of a juſt and honourable peace. The time, I doubt not, is at hand, when peace will court us, and when we may ſafely meet her. I do not, for one, deſpair of the public fortune; the reign of wickedneſs was never long; but ſuppoſing it eternal, would not a ſtate of war with it become eternal alſo? Let us accuſtom our eye to our ſtation; let us dare to tell our own hearts there is as yet no proſpect nor overture of peace; that the ſtate of the world

forbids

forbids it; that to defend our country is our poſt, and that our fathers have acquitted themſelves for us of more than is required of us for our children.

With theſe ſentiments in the people, and with the example and the ſacrifices they have a right to look for from thoſe who hold the firſt and moſt oſtenſible ſtations in the country, there will remain no real danger from the madneſs of the enemy, though doubtleſs much inconvenience, hardſhips, and unhappineſs; and whenever, from exhauſture and debility he ſhall wiſh for peace, there will be little difficulty in the conditions of it. The ſtate before the war, or the ſtate after it, are the ſole alternatives of a real, ſolid, and permanent pacification. The firſt is the peace of juſtice and humanity, the other, of political violence and wrong. There is in both, perhaps, apparent ſafety, and what the world regards as glory: in the firſt only, true wiſdom

wiſdom and true honour. As long as the war continues, I can ſee no reaſon for declining, or diſowning that object, however difficult, indiſtinct, or ſpeculative its attainment may become. I ſee many for keeping in it view and remembrance. When peace ſhall preſent herſelf in her own real form, it will be time enough to diſcuſs equivalents and compenſations; but as long as ſhe is only a name and a maſk, as long as ſhe is regarded by the enemy as his danger and his ruin, it cannot be unwiſe to keep alive the memory and the proſpect of the antient order of things, and of its renovation. The power of the enemy is neither baſed nor rooted, unleſs we make it ſo by an unjuſt and dangerous peace. His projects cannot all proſper, nor proſper always: he cannot be ſucceſsful every where; and he cannot fail in any place without failing every where; nor fail for a moment without failing for ever. The ball of wickedneſs unravels as it falls. Whatever is right,

and

and wiſe, and virtuous, grows ſtrong and clear, and firm by duration. Time is the enemy of every falſe and vicious ſyſtem, and the ſole enemy that it is neceſſary to oppoſe to them. That we may make the right uſe of this ſincere and faithful ally, is the beſt prayer I can make, and the beſt advice I can offer to the country; and as the ſole means that occur to me of rendering that advice practical, and finally triumphant, I preſume to recommend and provoke in the higheſt places, explicit counſels and generous reſolves, a great example, and a ſtrict economy.

END OF THE SECOND PART.